

MASSWORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

2016 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the MassWorks Infrastructure Program?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides a one-stop shop for municipalities and other eligible entities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development and job creation. The Program represents an administrative consolidation of six former grant programs:

- Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Grant
- Community Development Action Grant (CDAG)
- Growth District Initiative (GDI) Grant
- Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion Program (MORE)
- Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP)
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program.

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will replace each of the above cited programs and the six individual programs are now discontinued.

What types of activities does the program support?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides infrastructure grants for work including, but not limited to, sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, traffic signalization, curb-cuts, parking facilities, site preparation and improvements on publicly owned land, demolition, pedestrian walkways, and water treatment systems to support four project types:

- Multi-family housing development at a density of at least 4 units to the acre (both market and affordable units)
- Economic development in weak or distressed areas
- Community revitalization to promote mixed-use development
- Transportation improvements to enhance safety in small, rural communities

When will the MassWorks Infrastructure Program open a new funding round?

The 2016 competitive funding round will open August 22nd for projects that are ready to proceed as soon as weather permits during the upcoming construction season (Spring 2017). **Only those projects that are prepared to proceed to construction in the upcoming spring should apply for consideration.**

Has the MassWorks Application changed?

The 2016 MassWorks application has been updated from the 2015 application but no significant changes have been made.

If I submitted an application in a previous MassWorks Funding round, will I need to reapply to be considered in the 2016 MassWorks funding round?

Yes. If you wish to resubmit a project for consideration in the 2016 funding round you are required to reapply during the 2016 application period which runs from August 22nd through September 2nd, 2016.

If I am resubmitting an application from a previous round, will I have to retype the information I submitted previously?

No, if you submitted an application during a previous MassWorks funding round, the information has been saved to the online application system and will be available on June 3, 2016. At that time, you will be able to copy, edit and change the information that has been saved to the system. You will be required to copy the previous year's answers into a new 2016 application.

Will I need to set up an account to submit an application through the online system?

If you submitted an application during previous MassWorks funding rounds, your login and password for the online system have been saved and will remain the same. If you are a new user, you will be required to set up an account for the online system to be able to submit a 2016 MassWorks application.

If I have more than one eligible project can I submit multiple applications?

Yes, public entities can submit multiple applications during the competitive grant round. Each application will be evaluated individually for its readiness to proceed and meeting the program funding priorities.

What communities are considered to be “small, rural communities”?

Communities that have a population of 7,000 or less that were previously eligible for the Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP) as defined by MGL c.6C, s.47. In each year, there will be funds set aside and available only for transportation improvements to enhance safety in these communities.

Who is eligible to apply for a MassWorks grant?

A city or town, or other public agency with a charter that enables them to accept state grants on behalf of the municipality, and where the public agency has been designated by municipal officers to apply for grants on behalf of that city or town. Any eligible public agency acting on behalf of a municipality must submit a letter of support from the chief administrative officer of that municipality.

A small, rural community that received an award for transportation improvements to enhance safety is not eligible for funding if it has received an award within the last 3 years per MGL c.23A, s6(e). These communities are eligible to apply for new projects once the three year period had passed.

Is design an eligible expense?

Yes. Communities with a population of 7,000 or less seeking funding for transportation improvements to enhance safety are eligible to apply for design/engineering costs along with a construction grant. In that case, the project must be able to complete design/engineering in a period that allows the project to advance to construction during the upcoming construction season.

Communities with a population over 7,000 are eligible to apply for design/engineering costs along with a construction grant however no more than 10% of the total grant request may be used for design/engineering. If a project is seeking design/engineering funds as part of an application, the project must be able to complete design/engineering in a period that allows the project to advance to construction during the upcoming construction season.

Will my project be considered “ready” if it does not require design/engineering?

Yes. Projects that are able to proceed immediately to construction are considered “ready”. There are no additional design/engineering requirements that would not otherwise be required for a municipal improvement project.

What are the program funding priorities?

Priority for funding will be given to projects which support the production of multi-family housing in mixed-use districts that are well-connected to significant employment opportunities, job creation or that support economic development in weak or distressed areas. The 2016 round will also support communities that have engaged, are in the process of engaging in a Community Compact with the Commonwealth. Projects should also demonstrate consistency with the sustainable development principles and a reasonable level of readiness. Please see the MassWorks Infrastructure Program Guidelines for more details:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/infrastructure/massworks/guidance-documents/>

How will the competitive round work?

The online 2016 Application will be available on June 3, 2016. Applications will be accepted between August 22nd and September 2nd. All applications must be electronically submitted by September 2, 2016 to be considered during the 2016 funding round. Written decisions will be rendered to all applicants eight weeks after the close of the funding round.

Who will review and approve the applications?

The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development will consult a team of reviewers to evaluate pending applications and develop recommendations for funding. The team of reviewers includes but is not limited to the State Permit Ombudsman, Director of the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Director of Policy and Communications, MassWorks Infrastructure Program Staff, MassDOT including district offices, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and other applicable interests.

In addition to the aforementioned parties, Regional Planning Agencies will also participate in the application review process and have been invited to provide feedback on applications from their region to the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.

Final decisions will be rendered by the Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, in cooperation with the Secretary of Transportation and Administration and Finance.

How will I be notified if my community is awarded a MassWorks grant?

Applicants that are approved for funding through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be notified in writing of the approval. Approval letters may be accompanied by instructions for demonstrating readiness and any other required submissions as determined by the Secretary. Grant contracts will only be issued for projects that successfully meet all readiness requirements as outlined in the award letter or by program staff. Any project that receives an award but does not meet all requirements by the specified date will lose its funding commitment for that year and may be penalized during future funding rounds.

How will I be notified if my community is denied a MassWorks grant?

Applicants that are denied funding through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be notified in writing. If the reason for denial is a lack of available funds, that applicant may be considered at a later date that year if additional program funds become available. MassWorks Infrastructure Program staff will be available to discuss all project decisions upon request.

If I receive an award, how quickly can I obtain a contract?

Applicants that are approved in a fall award round are expected to execute a contract by the following spring. If your project requires a contract more quickly than the standard timeline, you should contact a member of the MassWorks staff to discuss the required timing for the contract and expected drawdown schedule.

All new contracts will be issued through the Intelligrants System, the same web-based application used to apply for MassWorks grants. In addition, a large majority of the MassWorks grant administrative process is conducted utilizing Intelligrants. The online process includes contracting, invoicing, reporting, and project closeout which will allow for advancements in efficiency and transparency.

Approved projects will be required to use Intelligrants to submit additional information regarding the project including a detailed breakdown of the project scope, funding allocations and drawdown schedule prior to receiving a contract. The additional information is submitted through the Municipal Contract Form using the Intelligrants System and must be reviewed and approved by the MassWorks office before it is considered complete.

For more information in the contracting process and contract requirements, please see the MassWorks Contract Handbook. This handbook is subject to change and you should discuss specific provisions with your MassWorks Project Manager.

Do I need to submit project designs with my application?

No. In most cases design specifications will not be required. In some cases, such as a road improvement that impacts a state-owned roadway, design specifications may be required to evaluate the project and may be requested during the application review period. Any project which impacts a state owned roadway should consult with the MassDOT District Office about the project prior to submitting a MassWorks application.

Does Complete Streets apply to this program?

Yes. Projects seeking MassWorks Infrastructure Program grants should be consistent with MassDOT's Complete Street design guidelines, which call for accommodation of all roadway users in a manner that is appropriate to the type of roadway and location. If the project impacts a state owned roadway the project design must be consistent with the Complete Street guidelines. The Complete Streets design guidelines were adopted in 2006 in the MassDOT Project Development and Design guide, and are available at:

<http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/DoingBusinessWithUs/ManualsPublicationsForms/ProjectDevelopmentDesignGuide.aspx>

What is the Preparing for Success Online Mapping Tool?

In order to assist in the application process, EOHED designed the Preparing for Success Online Mapping tool. The tool gives all communities access to an interactive online map to display a number of geographic districts and overlay these districts at one time. The online tool is available at: http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/eohed_mapping.php

How can I determine if my community or project site falls within a Geographic District included in Section IV?

To determine if your project falls within a district an Online Mapping Tool is available on the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory Office website under the MassWorks Infrastructure Program page: http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/map_ol/eohed_mapping.php

For additional information on Growth Districts, Chapter 43D and regional planning initiatives please visit the Massachusetts Permit Regulatory office website: www.mass.gov/mpro.

For information on Chapter 40R districts please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/chapter-40-r.html>

What is a Land Use Priority Plan and how do I know if my community has participated in one?

Land Use Priority Plans are planning efforts developed to identify priority development and preservation areas at the local, regional and state level within a designated region. The Plans are developed in partnership with municipalities, regional planning agencies, state agencies and stakeholder groups such as chambers of commerce and environmental advocacy organizations. The planning effort, led by EOHED and its partners, serves as a foundation for the Planning Ahead for Growth Strategy and is a framework for focusing public investment, technical assistance and private action.

As of Spring 2016, 123 of the Commonwealth's 351 municipalities will be included in a Land Use Priority Plan.

For more information on the Land Use Priority Plans please visit:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/planning/>

What is a Community Compact and how can my community participate in a Community Compact?

Established under Executive Order 537, a Community Compact is an agreement between the Commonwealth and a municipality. The Compact is based on an understanding of commitments the Commonwealth is willing to make in exchange for the community agreeing to aspire to best practices in local governance. A Compact with the Commonwealth establishes mutual standards, expectations, and accountability for both the state and municipalities.

For more information on Community Compacts and to find out how your community can participate please contact the Program Administrator at the Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services at (617) 626-2300 or visit [ww.mass.gov/cc](http://www.mass.gov/cc).

What happens if my community receives a grant award but the project is not ready to proceed by the required date(s)?

In order to ensure that the maximum benefit is realized from available grant funds, it is important that grant awards are put to use right away.

Projects put forward for consideration in the fall will be expected to complete permitting and design, secure all necessary rights of way, and obligate all other funding sources within 120 days of receipt of grant approval or immediately thereafter. Any project that receives an award but does not demonstrate readiness within a reasonable timeframe that would enable construction during the upcoming construction season, will lose its funding commitment for that year and will not be eligible to submit the project for funding consideration again until the following round.

Funds committed to projects that are unable to demonstrate readiness in a reasonable timeframe will be redistributed to other projects that are ready to proceed to construction.

What is the “Use it or Lose it” Policy?

There are limited funds available for statewide infrastructure projects in Massachusetts. It is imperative that all available funds are used in a timely fashion so that the maximum benefits of those investments are realized by communities in the near term. Therefore, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program places a significant emphasis on completing projects on-time and on-budget. All grant contracts will reflect a strict “use it or lose it” policy whereby communities must complete projects on-schedule and on-budget or the Commonwealth may terminate the grant. Accommodations associated with delays and cost overruns will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but only when the community can demonstrate that the delay was beyond their control and was reported immediately. Communities that complete their MassWorks Infrastructure Program projects on-time and on-budget will be recognized for doing so.

What happens if the project is delayed due to a state or local permit review period or utility company?

The applicant is responsible for completing all permitting, easements, town meeting votes, bidding, utility relocation and other requirements of the project, and these details must be included in the project timeline. Grant contracts will not be issued until all actions that are not covered under the MassWorks grant scope of work and are the responsibility of the municipality have been completed.

It is recommended that projects involving state permits seek advice of the permit issuing agencies prior to submitting an application for grant funds.

If there are unforeseen delays due to state permitting, the community should bring them to the attention of the program manager at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development immediately.

What should I do if I experience an unforeseen delay that is beyond my control?

If there are unforeseen delays, the community should bring them to the attention of the project manager at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development immediately. The grant contract will include instructions for this process.

Is there a set minimum or maximum grant award?

Communities that are applying under the economic development or housing category are encouraged to submit an application for the full scope of the infrastructure project costs (including a phased approach if applicable). If the program supports the project but funding is not available to cover the full expense of the project, the MassWorks Infrastructure Program may work with the community to identify a portion of the project which can be funded through the MassWorks program.

However, communities with a population of 7,000 or less that are applying for a transportation grant to enhance safety are eligible for no more than \$1 million in grant assistance in a three year period. Multiple communities may submit a joint application under which each community is eligible for no more than one million dollars in a three year period.

If there are other sources of funds that will contribute to this project, should they be identified in the application?

Yes. Any funds that are needed to complete the project should be clearly outlined in the application. The community must demonstrate that all funds other than the MassWorks grant have been secured for the project or that they can be secured shortly after a MassWorks grant award is made.

Is a local or private match required?

No. A local or private match is not required of this program however those applications requesting infrastructure funds that support a development project will be favored if a match is available.

Who will administer the MassWorks Infrastructure Program?

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program will be administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (ANF).

Where can I go for more information?

Please visit www.mass.gov/hed/massworks for additional information.